(b) the value of exports in rupee and dollar terms, during the same periods;

(c) the factors underlying the spurt in imports in the current financial year; and

(d) the measures Government is contemplating to narrow the emerging trade deficit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The value of imports and exports, in rupee and dollar terms, during the first six months (April—September) of 1994-95 and 1995-96 are as under:—

	(Rupee: In crores)		(Dollar: In million)	
	1994-95		1995-96	
	Dollar	Rupee	Dollar	Rupee
Import	12851	40315	17065	54145
Export	11621	36455	14685	46591

(c) The increased level of deficit could be attributed to an increase in both oil and non-oil imports, the latter comprising raw materials, intermediates, capital goods and export-linked imports; the higher level of non-oil imports is due to a higher industrial growth and an accelerated export performance.

(d) The key to narrowing the trade deficit lies in export growth. Recognising this, the Government have taken a number of steps to encourage and maintain a strong export growth. India's trade policy was liberalised in July, 1991 to respond to the opportunities and challenges posed by the domestic and international developments. The trade policy is aimed at creating a freer environment for trade, removing procedural irritants through simplification and streamlining of procedures, increasing export production, improving efficiency and sharpening competitive edge, facilitating input availability, focussing on quality and technological upgradation besides introducing and strengthening schemes for export promotion. Efforts have been made to provide cheaper export credit and provide tax exemption on export profits. Export promotion is a continueous process and steps are taken to boost exports in consultation with trade, industry and concerned institutions.

भारतीय खाद्य निगम द्वारा गेहूं और चावल की आर्थिक लागत

69. **श्री राम जेठमलानी:**
श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज:

क्या **खाद्य** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम द्वारा गेहूं व चावल की आर्थिक लागत गत वर्षों के दौरान निरंतर बढ़ी है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो वर्ष 1991-92 में और वर्ष 1994-95 के अंत में गेहूं और चावल की लागतें कितनी-कितनी थीं;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम से सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए गत कुछ वर्षों में खाद्यान्न की उठाई जाने वाली मात्रा में भी निरंतर कमी आ रही है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो वर्ष 1991-92 और 1994-95 के दौरान गेहूं व चावल की कितनी-कितनी मात्रा उठायी गयी?

खाद्य मंत्री (श्री अजित सिंह): (क) और (ख) जी, हां। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में गेहूं और चावल की आर्थिक लागत में वृद्धि हुई है जैसा कि भारतीय खाद्य निगम द्वारा सूचित किए गए निम्नलिखित आंकड़ों से स्पष्ट है।

गेहूं और चावल की आर्थिक लागत

(रुपए प्रति क्विंटल)

		1991-92	1994-95
गेहूं	:	390.79	551.17
चावल	:	497.04	694.71

(ग) और (घ) जी, हां। वर्ष 1991-92 और 1994-95 में सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अधीन राज्य सरकारों और उनके नामितियों द्वारा उठान की गई मात्राओं के सम्बन्ध में भारतीय खाद्य निगम द्वारा निम्नलिखित सूचना दी गई है:—

(मात्रा लाख मीटरी टनों में)

		1991-92	1994-95
गेहूं	:	90.49	49.83
चावल	:	103.83	80.13

Strengthening of Consumer Fora

70. SHRI MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to provide Rs. 61 crore to strengthen and ensure smooth functioning of Consumer fora across the country;

(b) if so, whether Government were aware of the lack of infrastructure faced by the Consumer Fora;

(c) if so, whether any concrete programme of action as to how this amount of Rs. 61 crore will be spent has been formulated;

(d) if so, what are the details of the same;

(e) whether Government have considered various recommendations of the working group, set up by Government; and

(f) if so, how many of the suggestions have so far been considered and by what time they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DEPTT. OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM) (SHRI VENOD SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) On the initiative taken by Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs & Public Distribution, the Planning Commission has agreed to give one time assistance of Rs. 61 crores to the State Governments to strengthen the infrastructure of the consumer courts. This assistance will be over and above their Annual Plan Budget and will be released in four instalments.

The above assistance is to be released to the States/UTs in four half-yearly instalments, in 1995-96 and 1996-97.

(e) and (f) For the above mentioned plan scheme, Central Government has not set up any Working Group.

Import of Wheat and Sugar

71. SHRI CHIMANBHAI HARIBHAI SHUKLA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat, sugar and other foodgrains imported during each of the last three years, year-wise by STC and MMTC;

(b) the rates and countries from which these were imported year-wise;

(c) the foreign exchange spent thereon year-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to increase production of wheat and other foodgrains during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) to (c) No quantity of wheat and rice has been imported on govt. account by STC and MMTC during the last 3 years. No sugar has also been imported by STC and MMTC during the years 1992-93 and 1993-94. During 1994-95, a quantity of 9.75 lakh tonnes of sugar valued at US $ 37.93 crores (Provisional) was imported by STC and MMTC. Details regarding rates, countries from which imported etc., are given in Statement (*See* below)